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Human rights questions: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

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The right to food

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 59/202 of 20 December 2004, as well as all Commission on Human Rights resolutions in this regard, in particular resolution 2005/18 of 14 April 2005,[1]

Recalling also the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[2] which provides that everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for her or his health and

[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2005, Supplement No. 3* (E/2005/23 (Part I), chap. II, sect. A.
[2] Resolution 217 A (III).

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well-being, including food, the Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition[3] and the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[4]

Recalling further the provisions of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,[5] in which the fundamental right of every person to be free from hunger is recognized,

Bearing in mind the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the World Food Summit Plan of Action[6] and the Declaration of the World Food Summit: five years later, adopted in Rome on 13 June 2002,[7]

Welcoming the concrete recommendations contained in the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security, adopted by the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations,

Reaffirming that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated,

Reaffirming also that a peaceful, stable and enabling political, social and economic environment, at both the national and the international levels, is the essential foundation that will enable States to give adequate priority to food security and poverty eradication,

Reiterating, as in the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the Declaration of the World Food Summit: five years later, that food should not be used as an instrument of political or economic pressure, and reaffirming in this regard the importance of international cooperation and solidarity, as well as the necessity of refraining from unilateral measures that are not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations and that endanger food security,

Convinced that each State must adopt a strategy consistent with its resources and capacities to achieve its individual goals in implementing the recommendations contained in the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the World Food Summit Plan of Action and, at the same time, cooperate regionally and internationally in order to organize collective solutions to global issues of food security in a world of increasingly interlinked institutions, societies and economies where coordinated efforts and shared responsibilities are essential,

Recognizing that the problems of hunger and food insecurity have global dimensions and that they are likely to persist and even to increase dramatically in some regions unless urgent, determined and concerted action is taken, given the anticipated increase in the world's population and the stress on natural resources,

Expressing its deep concern at the number and scale of natural disasters, diseases and pests and their increasing impact in recent years, which have resulted

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[3] *Report of the World Food Conference, Rome, 5–16 November 1974* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.75.II.A.3), chap. I.

[4] See resolution 55/2.

[5] See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

[6] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *Report of the World Food Summit, 13–17 November 1996* (WFS 96/REP), part one, appendix.

[7] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *Report of the World Food Summit: five years later, 10–15 June 2002*, part one, appendix; see also A/57/499, annex.

in a massive loss of life and livelihood and threatened agricultural production and food security, in particular in developing countries,

Stressing the importance of reversing the continuing decline of official development assistance devoted to agriculture, both in real terms and as a share of total official development assistance,

1. *Reaffirms* that hunger constitutes an outrage and a violation of human dignity and therefore requires the adoption of urgent measures at the national, regional and international levels for its elimination;

2. *Also reaffirms* the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger, so as to be able to fully develop and maintain their physical and mental capacities;

3. *Considers it intolerable* that there are about 852 million undernourished people in the world, that every five seconds a child under the age of 5 dies from hunger or hunger-related diseases somewhere in the world, when, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the planet could produce enough food to provide 2,100 kilocalories per person per day to 12 billion people, twice the world's present population;

4. *Expresses its concern* that women are disproportionately affected by hunger, food insecurity and poverty, in part as a result of gender inequality and discrimination, that in many countries, girls are twice as likely as boys to die from malnutrition and preventable childhood diseases, and that it is estimated that almost twice as many women as men suffer from malnutrition;

5. *Encourages* all States to take action to address gender inequality and discrimination against women, in particular where it contributes to the malnutrition of women and girls, including measures to ensure the full and equal realization of the right to food and ensuring that women have equal access to resources, including income, land and water, to enable them to feed themselves and their families;

6. *Encourages* the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the right to food to continue mainstreaming a gender perspective in the fulfilment of his mandate, and encourages the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and all other United Nations bodies and mechanisms addressing the right to food and food insecurity to integrate a gender perspective into their relevant policies, programmes and activities;

7. *Encourages* all States to take steps with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of the right to food, including steps to promote the conditions for everyone to be free from hunger and, as soon as possible, to enjoy fully the right to food, and to create and adopt national plans to combat hunger;

8. *Acknowledges* that many indigenous organizations and representatives of indigenous communities have expressed in different forums their deep concerns over the obstacles and challenges for their full enjoyment of the right to food, and calls upon States to take special actions to combat the root causes of the disproportionately high level of hunger and malnutrition among indigenous peoples and the pervasive discrimination against them;

9. *Requests* all States and private actors, as well as international organizations within their respective mandates, to take fully into account the need to promote the effective realization of the right to food for all, including in the ongoing negotiations in different fields;

10. *Stresses* the need to make efforts to mobilize and optimize the allocation and utilization of technical and financial resources from all sources, including external debt relief for developing countries, and to reinforce national actions to implement sustainable food security policies;

11. *Recalls* the importance of the New York Declaration on Action against Hunger and Poverty, which has been supported by more than one hundred countries to date, and recommends the continuation of efforts aimed at identifying additional sources of financing for the fight against hunger and poverty;

12. *Recognizes* that the promises made at the World Food Summit in 1996 to halve the number of persons who are undernourished are not being fulfilled, and invites once again all international financial and developmental institutions, as well as the relevant United Nations agencies and funds, to give priority to and provide the necessary funding to realize the aim of halving by 2015 the proportion of people who suffer from hunger, as well as the right to food as set out in the Rome Declaration on World Food Security[*] and the United Nations Millennium Declaration;[*]

13. *Urges* States to give adequate priority in their development strategies and expenditures to the realization of the right to food;

14. *Stresses* the importance of international development cooperation and assistance, in particular in emergency situations such as natural and man-made disasters, diseases and pests, for the realization of the right to food and the achievement of sustainable food security, while recognizing that each country has the primary responsibility for ensuring the implementation of national programmes and strategies in this regard;

15. *Calls upon* Member States, the United Nations system and other relevant stakeholders to support national efforts aimed at responding rapidly to the food crises currently occurring across Africa;

16. *Invites* all relevant international organizations, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, to promote policies and projects that have a positive impact on the right to food, to ensure that partners respect the right to food in the implementation of common projects, to support Member States strategies aimed at the fulfilment of the right to food and to avoid any actions that could have a negative impact on the realization of the right to food;

17. *Takes note* of the interim report of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the right to food,[*] and also takes note of his valuable work in the promotion of the right to food;

[*] See A/60/174.

18. *Supports* the realization of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur as extended by the Commission on Human Rights in its resolution 2003/25 of 22 April 2003;[9]

19. *Requests* the Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to provide all the necessary human and financial resources for the effective fulfilment of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur;

20. *Welcomes* the work already done by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in promoting the right to adequate food, in particular its general comment No. 12 (1999) on the right to adequate food (article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights), in which the Committee affirmed, inter alia, that the right to adequate food is indivisibly linked to the inherent dignity of the human person and is indispensable for the fulfilment of other human rights enshrined in the International Bill of Human Rights, and is also inseparable from social justice, requiring the adoption of appropriate economic, environmental and social policies, at both the national and the international levels, oriented to the eradication of poverty and the fulfilment of all human rights for all;[10]

21. *Recalls* general comment No. 15 (2002) of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the right to water (articles 11 and 12 of the Covenant), in which the Committee noted, inter alia, the importance of ensuring sustainable water resources for human consumption and agriculture in realization of the right to adequate food;[11]

22. *Welcomes* the adoption by the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations of the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security, which represent a practical tool to promote the realization of the right to food for all, contribute to the achievement of food security and thus provide an additional instrument in the attainment of internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration;

23. *Also welcomes* the continued cooperation of the High Commissioner, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Special Rapporteur, and encourages them to continue their cooperation in this regard;

24. *Calls upon* all Governments to cooperate with and assist the Special Rapporteur in his task, to supply all necessary information requested by him and to give serious consideration to responding favourably to the requests of the Special Rapporteur to visit their countries to enable him to fulfil his mandate more effectively;

25. *Requests* the Special Rapporteur to submit a comprehensive report to the Commission on Human Rights at its sixty-second session and an interim report to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session on the implementation of the present resolution;

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[9] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2003, Supplement No. 3* (E/2003/23), chap. II, sect. A.

[10] *Ibid., 2000, Supplement No. 2* and corrigendum (E/2000/22 and Corr.1), annex V, para. 4.

[11] *Ibid., 2003, Supplement No. 2* (E/2003/22), annex IV.

26. *Invites* Governments, relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, treaty bodies and civil society actors, including non-governmental organizations, as well as the private sector, to cooperate fully with the Special Rapporteur in the fulfilment of his mandate, inter alia, through the submission of comments and suggestions on ways and means of realizing the right to food;

27. *Decides* to continue the consideration of the question at its sixty-first session under the item entitled "Human rights questions".